

JOHN JOHNSON!

I wish it distinctly understood that, although my name is John Johnson, I am in no way connected with, or responsible for, the doings, good, bad, or indifferent, of any other John Johnson now inhabiting what I call, this mundane vale of tears.

Johnson, I am pained to say, is not a rare cognomen. On the contrary, it is confoundedly common. Then my first name, John, is not of unfrequent occurrence. Oh, why did not my parents call me Ichabod, or Bezael, or Magormissibib, or some other good old Testament name, that would have distinguished me from the thousand-and-one other Johnsons?

"There is a letter advertised for you," said my partner one fine morning.

I was expecting a letter from one of our collectors out West, so I went to the post office to see if that might be the expected epistle.

"Letter advertised for John Johnson?" said I to the clerk.

"Where from, probably?" asked he.

"Somewhere out West."

"That is postmarked Illinois."

"That is it then," I hazarded.

He gave me the letter and I returned to the store. This is what it contained:

"DEAR BUT CRUEL JOHN—Do return and all will be forgiven. Your children cry for you, and if you do not wish them to hate you, come back to us again. You shall have your own way in all things, dearest John, if you will only return to your heart-broken wife,

MEHETABEL JOHNSON."

Truly, a nice letter for a respectable bachelor to receive. I was ashamed of myself for having made such a mistake, and dared not re-enclose the letter to "John Johnson" and mail it again. It seemed as if everybody would know that I had opened another man's correspondence. I fancied that the post office clerk would jeer and scoff at me, and think it only a ruse on my part to avoid meeting the responsibility of ill treating and deserting that poor wife and those lachrymose children. I know that my fears were absurd, but I dared not look at the letter again. I thrust it in to my pocket, and resolved to burn it as soon as I should be alone.

I forgot it. Miss Eliza Sprowls reminded me of it. I am—no, I was—engaged to Miss Eliza Sprowls, and in a moment of tenderness, she offered to sew a defaulting button on my coat. She returned it with a note, in which she enclosed the wretched letter from Mrs. Mehetabel Johnson, of Illinois. Miss Sprowls words were few:

"Base deceiver! I have loved you! Now, farewell forever! Return to the woman you have so foully wronged, but nevermore hope for forgiveness from ELIZA."

And all that from being unfortunate enough to bear the name of John Johnson! I was in despair, and became, I am pained to say, somewhat irascible. I quarreled with my partner, and had difficulty in avoiding a collision of a personal nature—not wholly unconnected with black and blue eyes—with our earman. Just after these little matters were adjusted, my tailor, a prosy man with a gray face, came in.

He wanted to make me a uniform! Me! If there is any one thing I am unlikely to do, it is to wear soldier-clothes. I detest the army. War, I acknowledge, is a good thing, and soldiers are very necessary, but buttons and gimp engage me. A plumed hat gives me vertigo. It is a psychological idiosyncrasy of mine to detest the army, and I don't care if it is unphilosophical.

I restrained the fierce desire that seized me—a desire to kick my tailor out of the counting-room. I became sarcastic.

"Ah! My uniform! Yes, I suppose now you think my figure would become a waist-belt and tight coat—don't you? Eh?"

I weighed two hundred and twenty-eight pounds avoirdupois, and am only five feet four.

"A snug fitting coat, sir," began the tailor, "is always considered—"

"Yes—yes; a snug fit to this—tapping my digestive organs gently—"would be considerable, certainly. Ah, now don't you think I have a commanding appearance? Ha, ha! Don't you see? I ought to be in command! Ha, ha, ha!"

My effort at a laugh was painful to the last degree.

The tailor began to feel astonished, if not distressed, and was duly astonished to learn that I had no idea whatever of joining the army.

I asked him in a tone of scorn, what gave him such a ridiculous notion.

He produced a newspaper, in which it was stated that Mr. John Johnson was actively engaged in organizing a regiment of the Shackle's Brigade, and the colonelcy had been offered him by all the men so far recruited.

I used as strong language as a respectable gentleman of business ought ever to employ, to convince the man that the John Johnson he had read about was not the John Johnson he was talking about; and he retired quite crest-fallen, with an evident belief that he had lost my patronage.

On going to my hotel to dinner—I always live at a hotel—I found about forty thin notes awaiting me.

They proved on inspection to be duns. There was a bill of nineteen dollars and fifty cents from my boot maker. There was a bill of fifteen dollars from my hatter. There was a bill of forty-three dollars and seventy-five cents from a gentleman's clothing establishment. There was no end of bills. A rough total which I eliminated amounting to the pleasing sum of one hundred and ninety odd dollars!

I was thunderstruck!

Most of these tradesmen had known me and enjoyed my patronage for fifteen years. I had paid them every Christmas as regularly as Christmas came. Was it Christmas now? I wondered. Christmas, with the

thermometer ninety-two degrees in the shade?

Was I crazy?

I was in a fair way to become so, when the boys began to call to collect the bills. The rascally tradesmen knew my dinner hour, and sent their menials to catch me on the minute.

"Marster wants to know of yer kin settle this 'ere little account terday?" was the formula which greeted me from some dozen dirty youths.

"Tell your master to mind his business," was my reply—as I now see it, an illogical one.

"Does your master think I am going to fail?" I asked the most intelligent of those youths.

"Oh, no, sir; not going to fail," replied the boy; "but then, sir, battle is dangerous, and nobody knows when anybody enlists, whether everybody will be killed, or whether somebody will come back. And" continued he, apologetically, "master likes to keep these things square, you know. It prevents confusion."

I understood at last that the military John Johnson had been again mistaken for me. It did not soothe me at all. I'm afraid I used very rash and hasty words concerning that gentleman and his regiment.

I had to write a series of notes to all these persons, explaining that I would pay them, as usual, at Christmas, as I hadn't the wildest intention of going to the wars. They were all satisfied except a cross-eyed person, who had furnished me with some dozens of bottled ale. He thought I was trying to slip him, and has sent a boy twice a day, quite regularly down to this present writing. He may continue to do so.

Miss Eliza Sprowls was obdurate. I consumed three days in writing her a letter of explanation. She returned it unopened; and my heart is still like a lonely ring-dove, whose mate has perished by the destroying hand of an insatiable Fowler.

Only the other day a lawyer completed my cup of woe. He came to my partner to learn if I had left a will.

"He hasn't left any will with me," said my partner.

"Where would he be likely to have left one?" asked the legal man.

"Well, I should say at his hotel among other private papers."

The lawyer took my address, and calling found me at home. He introduced himself, and said:

"Have you charge of Mr. Johnson's effects?"

"I have."

"You are—"

"Mr. Johnson."

"Ah! a relative?"

"Of whom?"

"The deceased."

"Relative of a good many deceased persons, I believe, sir."

"The deceased John Johnson I mean."

"I am John Johnson."

"But I wish to find the will of the gentleman of that name who came from England in childhood—"

"I came from England in childhood, sir."

"Who began life as an office boy in a bonded warehouse—"

"I began it in that way, sir."

"But afterwards went into the drysalting business in Water street—"

"I am in that business, in that street, sir."

"Who raised a regiment of Zouaves, and perished nobly at the battle of Bull Run, in defence of his adopted land—"

"Stop, sir. Do I look like a Zouave? You mean me, sir, evidently, in all your items of description but the last. On your conscience, now, (a strange expression to employ towards a lawyer!) do I look like a Zouave?"

He acknowledged that I did not. My relatives in England had learned that John Johnson was killed at Bull Run, and on inquiry had been informed that I was the man. It was known that I was doing well and had accumulated "something comfortable." So over they sent, with an indecent haste, to see what they could get hold of.

I never saw such a man as that lawyer. He expressed regret in every line of his countenance at my condition of health and vitality. His language even implied that he was sorry that I had not fought, bled, and died on the gory field. I got angry.

I took the lawyer by the nose. It was prominent. I led him rather gently to the head of the stairs, passed him more violently in front of me, elevated my right boot to the level of his coat-skirts, and kicked him twice with the utmost vigor.

He went down stairs eccentrically, and fractured his nose on the step.

The result was, an action for assault and battery. I was fined, and had to pay costs.

My adversary knew the wrinkles of the law, and made my unfortunate name cost me just eighty-three dollars and thirty-eight cents.

Yet my name is still John Johnson!

A fellow stole a saw, and on trial told the judge he only took it in a joke. "How far did you carry it?" asked the judge. "Two miles," answered the prisoner. "That's carrying the joke too far," remarked the judge, and the prisoner was committed.

Gen. Harney has gone to Fort Monroe. It is thought he will have command of the reinforcements and participate in the campaign on the Southern coast.

"Well, Robert, how much did your pig weigh?" "It didn't weigh so much as I expected, and I always thought it wouldn't."

If you can't coax the fish to bite, try your persuasive powers upon a cross dog, and you will be sure to succeed.

A contemporary says "bad habits stick to folks." Wouldn't it be better to say that "folks stick to bad habits?"

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which were swayed by its CHARMING EFFECT during its play in Atchison last winter. We also take pleasure in referring to the unbounded and highly flattering opinions of its merits which it has everywhere elicited from the

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